BALLET TODAY

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BALLET TODAY

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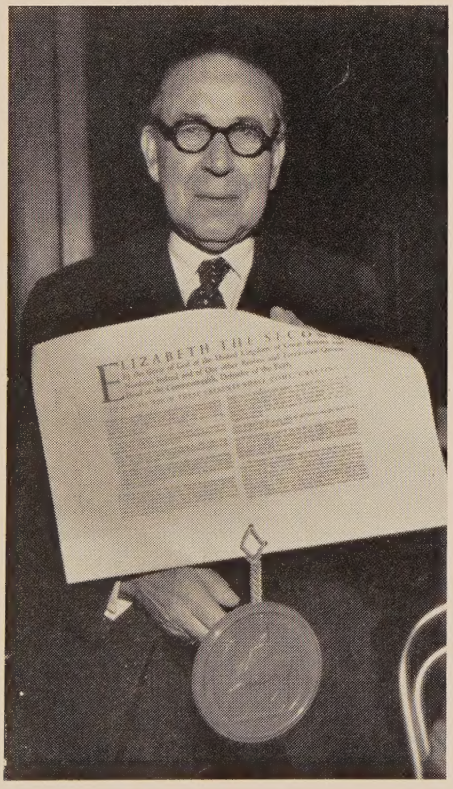
Left: The Royal Opera House London
Photo: Felix Fonteyn

Below: Lord Waverley with the Royal Charter.



LONDON

During February the Press were summoned to a Conference at the Royal Opera House "to hear a statement of some magnitude to be made by the Rt. Hon. Viscount Waverley, G.C.B., G.S.C.I., G.C.I.E."

Indicating the Charter with its Great Seal Lord Waverley announced that Her Majesty The Queen having been humbly petitioned, had now graciously granted this Royal Charter, and that in future the three separate entities, the Sadler's Wells Ballet, the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet, and the Sadler's Wells Ballet School, (both at Colet Gardens and at Richmond) would be embraced under the one title of THE ROYAL BALLET.

This was a proud day indeed for all associated with this great Company, and our thoughts went out to Dame Ninette de Valois unable to be present owing to illness, who from very humble beginnings, with tireless energy and tremendous courage had never lost faith in the future.

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BACK STAGE

BACKSTAGE PHOTOGRAPH

Jeffrey Kovel's Spanish was little better than Estella Nova's English, but the resident Cupid of Festival Ballet with eight bulls-eyes to his credit, soon overcame this difficulty, and the two were wed during January. Jeffrey Kovel recently visited his family in New South Wales, and Australians have written in to me to say that his many friends were amazed at the progress he has made since he left Australia five years ago. Our photograph shews centre, bride and groom; l. to r., Flemming Flindt, Dr. Julian Braunsweg, Benn Toff (Stage Director), and John Gilpin. This wedding brings the total to eight married couples amongst the dancers within the Company.

GALA PERFORMANCE

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, and H.R.H. Princess Margaret have consented to be present at the Gala Performance to be held at the Royal Opera House, London, on Tuesday March 26th at 8 p.m. The performance, to be given by The Royal Ballet, in aid of the Sadler's Wells Ballet Benevolent Fund and the Sadler's Wells School Fund for Students, will include *Petrouchka*, with Margot Fonteyn as The Ballerina, Alexander Grant as Petrouchka, Peter Clegg as The Moor, and Frederick Ashton as The Old Conjurer.

Alicia Markova, the Company's first ballerina, will open the programme with *Les Sylphides*, in which she will be accompanied by Nadia Nerina, Philip Chatfield and Elaine Fifield.

Frederick Ashton's *Birthday Offering*, the ballet specially created for the 25th Anniversary of the Sadler's Wells Ballet on May 5th, 1956, will close the programme, and in this ballet all the company's ballerinas and principal male soloists will dance.

The music for the performance of *Petrouchka* will be conducted by Sir Malcolm Sargent, and by Robert Irving in the other two ballets.

THE TRAVELLERS

Almost simultaneously came news of several tours arranged by Royal Ballet dancers. Rowena Jackson and Bryan Ashbridge are joining up with Derek and Pearl Westlake, (who used to be with Ballet Rambert) for a tour of New Zealand which will commence on April 10th at Invercargill, visiting Dunedin, Wellington, and finishing at the Auckland Festival on May 22nd. Rowena and Bryan will then join Margot Fonteyn and Michael Somes for a tour of Australia commencing May 27th until June 22nd, and all four will dance with the Borovansky Ballet at Sydney and Melbourne, for two weeks in each city. Full details of the programme will be published in our next issue.

Beryl Grey, who has resigned from the Royal Ballet as a permanent member, is making appearances on the Continent and is planning a South American tour in May and June.

Beryl will appear from time to time with the Royal Ballet as a guest artist. Her final appearance as a full member will be in *Le Lac des Cygnes* on April 18th.

Nadia Nerina is also off on her travels again, this time to Scotland for two weeks commencing March 11th, with Alexis Rassine in their *Ballet Highlights* which was so successful on their tour of the provinces last year. Nadia and Alexis are seasoned travellers, for in the past they have made two very successful tours of South Africa.

In the Autumn the Royal Ballet will commence the longest ever tour of America, opening at the Metropolitan Opera House New York on 8th September for four weeks, and although full details are not yet completed at the time of going to press, the Company is expected to be away for about five months.

Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet, not to be outdone in all this getting around, are off to Barcelona for a month, where they will have a four-week season at the Opera House commencing April 29th.

Festival Ballet is also making extensive tours abroad commencing in Oslo on March 22nd, proceeding to Copenhagen on 29th March and Aarhus on 9th April. They leave Denmark on 11th April, and commence a ten-week tour which opens at Dusseldorf in Germany on 23rd April. At the time of going to press we have no full information on this particular tour, but I understand it will probably include Austria and Italy, and will bring them back to London in time to open their usual season at the Festival Hall on 9th July.

EXHIBITION

The Mayor will welcome Festival Ballet to Brighton on Monday, 25th February, when he opens an exhibition of Mike Davis' ballet photographs at Fairlie Place College. The Principal, Miss Kathleen Walker, is inviting members of Roedean and other leading colleges in the district to be present at the reception to meet Anton Dolin and members of the Festival Ballet Company. The Company will then be dancing at the Hippodrome Brighton for the whole of the week.

The April issue of Ballet Today will be published on 21st March.

WIESBADEN FESTIVAL

The traditional May Festival of opera, drama and ballet will be held in Wiesbaden, Germany, from May 5th to 31st this year. May 12th and 13th will be ballet nights, when *Don Quixote* will be performed, and on May 29th and 30th there will be dancing by the Spanish Ballet of Barcelona. Also at Koblenze each week from July onwards a water festival and ballet is performed, a spectacle worth seeing. Readers might like to know that regular cruises down the Rhine coincide with these dates. Details appear on another page.

FILM NEWS

Michel Panaieff is to portray the Russian ballet master in M-G-M's *Silk Stockings*, starring Fred Astaire, Cyd Charisse and Janis Paige. He also dances with Belita in the musical. This marks Panaieff's initial return to M-G-M since *Gaby* for which he staged and created the dances for Leslie Caron. A former member of the Russian ballet and an established artist in New York and Europe, Panaieff's school, in addition to his company, includes talent from all over the world as well as such Hollywood stars as Cyd Charisse, Gene Kelly, Mitzi Gaynor, Vera-Ellen and European ballerina Lila Zali. His Ballet Concerto Company, now being sponsored by the Southern California Ballet Guild, has just returned from a tour of Canada. It has also won recent success on television.

Silk Stockings in CinemaScope and Metrocolor with Perspecta Stereophonic Sound, is being directed by Rouben Mamoulian and produced by Arthur Freed.

News from the World

Barbara shields the Witchboy from the menacing crowd:
Photo: Particam

HOLLAND

The Witchboy. (Het Heksenjong.) First given by the Ballet der Lage Landen at the Stadsschouwburg, Amsterdam.

Choreography by Jack Carter; decor and costumes by Norman McDowell; music by Leonard Salzedo.

Cast:

The Witchboy	Norman McDowell
The Blind One	Jack Carter
Barbara Allen	Angela Bayley
Her Mother	Greetje Donker
Her Sister	Millette d'Ungern-Sternberg
The Head of the Sect	Johan Mittertrainer
Lady behind the bar	Mascha ter Weeme

Story.

The Ballet is based on the American folk-song *Barbara Allen* which also gave the theme for the play *Dark of the Moon.* Celia Franca has also produced a ballet on the same subject in America. The ballet is set in a narrow minded American village about one hundred years ago. The first scene takes place in the local bar where we see Barbara Allen, her young sister, her mother and other members of the village. The local religious leader comes in: he is in love with Barbara but she dislikes him and avoids him: he is too old and too cold-blooded for her. Eventually, when his advances become unbearable, she hastily throws a scarf round her shoulders and runs out into the night.

In the course of her wanderings she arrives in a wild, deserted place and as she is looking around her, half fearfully, she sees something moving in the depths of a cave. She quickly conceals herself as, out of the cave, feeling her way with a stick, comes an old witch-woman. As Barbara watches, half fascinated, half terrified, the witch gives birth to a boy—the Heksenjong. He is fully grown; as the mother gropes her way blindly back to her hole, he expresses the excitement and wonder of finding himself alive. Barbara is now completely fascinated and reveals herself to him. At first he is frightened, for the only other living being he has seen is the repellent old blind one, but he too feels attracted by this girl. They dance together, at first timidly, then ecstatically. At the end of their dance the witch once more comes fumbling her way out of the cave: in her path lies the bright scarf which has fallen from Barbara's shoulders. She picks it up and feels the soft silk. Barbara is terrified of her but, encouraged by the Witchboy, she lets the old woman touch her face with her withered fingers. The witch, still clutching the scarf, feels her way back into the cave after the two lovers.

The last scene returns to the bar. A square dance is in progress. Suddenly among the dancers appear Barbara and the Witchboy. The dancing boys and girls eye him but do not wish to interrupt the dance, until Barbara's sister, upset by Barbara's obvious absorption in this strange man, breaks up the dance and brings her mother forward. Now the hostility of the villagers becomes more marked, as the Head of the Sect commands Barbara to give up her strange, devilish lover. But she, torn between love and religious terror, will not. The two are torn apart, and the villagers, alight with hysterical hatred of something they do not understand, hang the boy. Then, crouched on their knees around the swaying figure, a reaction sweeps over them: the mother of Barbara rushes desperately to the door, flings it open—and there stands the Witch, still holding Barbara's scarf in her hand. She has come to find her son. And—but to reveal the dénouement would destroy one of the most dramatic moments in all ballet.

Choreography.

If there are only three or four choreographers of major importance to arise in the world of ballet in the years since the war, with this work Jack Carter unmistakably enters this category. In his previous ballets, both in England and for this group in Holland, he has given every indication of great promise, for his ballets have always been at once original, intelligent, musical and thoroughly professional. In the *Witchboy* he has for the first time attempted a full-scale major work and has created a masterpiece, a masterpiece moreover on a theme which choreographers such as Cranko and Howard have tackled without success. The dramatic construction of the story is excellent, the character of the villagers being immediately established in the first scene, after which tension is skilfully built up to the birth of the boy, his wild, almost hysterical dance of joy at finding himself alive and his rapturous encounter with Barbara. Then the dramatic tension is relaxed for the square dance: after this events move swiftly and inevitably towards tragedy. And with the entry of the Witch comes a moment of shock for which it is difficult to find a parallel in the past twenty years of ballet. It is no exaggeration to say that for a moment one's heart seems to stop beating.

The choreography is clean, clear and inventive, and this ballet falls into the very small category of which one can say that it is immediately lucid and, beyond the title of the work, needs no further explanation beyond what is shown on the stage—indeed, there is no story printed on the programme; the ballad of Barbara Allen and the changes of scene alone are given. The dance for the Witchboy and the pas de deux with Barbara are full of swift-moving, clear, inventive movements and the unusual line of the choreography is not bound to the musical rhythm: rather it counterpoints it. The square dance owes perhaps

something to " Seven Brides for Seven Brothers " but is not the poorer for that. And the Witch herself, with no dancing to do, emerges as a figure of such force that it is hard to think how Carter could ever be replaced in this role—Helpmann, Lichine or Massine being unavailable. The handling of the corps de ballet is masterly and the rough treatment and murder of the boy never give the unpleasantly sadistic impression created by similar incidents in such a ballet as *Miracle in the Gorbals*: this is exactly how a hysterical, primitive community would behave in such a circumstance, and much as one feels for the boy one can also understand the sentiments which move the crowd to destroy something so strange and unlike themselves.

Dancing.

Angela Bayley and Norman McDowell, faced with the roles of a lifetime, take their opportunities to the highest extent of their powers and are practically always entirely successful in their characterisations. Barbara is a real Nora Kaye role, and those who have always looked on Bayley as a virtuoso dancer of great comic gifts found her performance in this role a revelation. The Witchboy falls more naturally within McDowell's scope, and he gives a performance of high quality, while Carter's Witch is only comparable to Lichine's Kostchei and in some ways excels this. Johan Mittertrainer, Mascha ter Weeme and Greetje Donker perform their roles with tremendous projection and in the very young Millette d'Ungern-Sternberg it is not hard to discern a brilliant Swanhilda in years to come.

Decor, Music.

The decor and costumes by Norman McDowell are at once functional and attractive, while the costume and make-up for the Witch are a tour de force. The set is not changed throughout the ballet, the slight structure conveying the impression of an American village bar remaining in darkness during the scene in the open. If the scenery seems to owe something to *Fall River Legend* it is difficult to know what else the designer could have done, as both ballets take place in primitive American communities.

It is hard to pass an authoritative decision on Salzedo's music for it was originally written for a large orchestra and then rearranged for two pianos, percussion and guitar; but dramatic impact it certainly has in plenty, coupled with more clarity and maturity of approach than one remembers from his *Mardi Gras* and *The Fugitive*. Salzedo flew over for the first performance and shared in the almost frantic applause which greeted the new ballet. With this work, both Jack Carter and the Ballet der Lage Landen have risen to full artistic maturity.

JANET SINCLAIR

CHICAGO: Christmas Season.

With three of our major ballet companies touring abroad and with our opera companies commissioning no new ballets, it was a dance dull autumn for those American cities not visited by the Royal Danes. In Chicago activity resumed with the coming of Christmas. Kolo, a troupe of Yugoslav folk singers and dancers, gave three performances at the Civic Opera House just before the holidays; on December 23 a group named Stage Arts Theatre gave its initial performance at the Goodman Theatre; beginning Christmas day, the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo had a two week season at the Civic Opera House.

Of the four ballets premiered by Stage Arts Theatre only Romola James' *Integration* to music by Paul Bowles was creatively competent. A short opening scene shows Negro and white children playing together until adult intervention makes them conscious of their colour difference. This simple episode in hops and skips, an unadorned choreography for the very young dancers of the cast, was the best of the evening. In the ballet's big scene a young Negro attempts to break the colour line in a segregated public place and is beaten by a group of white men. Mentally and physically broken, he encounters a white woman who wishes to atone the wrong. The rhythmically distinct dances as Negro and white couples enter their area of the segregated place were wonderfully conceived and the depicting of the beating was realistically effective. Only in the encounter between the beaten man and the atoning woman did the action become annoyingly rhetorical and the choreography commonplace; coming at the very end, this too lengthy pas de deux considerably weakened Miss James' ballet.

The promise of three new works set hopes high for Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo's season. Unfortunately, not one was as successful or distinguished as last year's addition to the repertory, the Cocteau—Heinz Rosen—Chailley *La Dame a la Licorne*.

Sombreros, by Leon Danielian to a suite of Mexican folk tunes by Ivan Boutnikoff and performed against a blue cyclorama by the corps de ballet flashily costumed by William Cecil, is not only an almost plotless ballet but also an almost danceless one. By contrast, *Harlequinade* was a major undertaking. Originally choreographed in the last century by Marius Petipa, it was recreated by Boris Romanoff in this century for his Romantic Theatre and subsequently staged by him for other companies but never before on this side of the Atlantic. The present production by BRdMC introduces the ballet to North America. Drigo's music is slight but lively and on stage Rolf Gerard generously elaborated Venice, yet choreographer Romanoff failed to devise a really interesting ballet. To tell a tale involving Harlequin,

Pierrot and their traditional associates, Romanoff chose the crude gesture-mime of commedia dell' arte. This convention is the choreographer's premise which the viewer should accept. But the viewer can ask that the choreographer use it cleverly, clearly, economically. To present the action, Romanoff uses commedia dell' arte methods clearly, but in a very long winded way and with only occasional originality. The dances are incidental to the action; at any one time only a few members of the large cast participate—the rest are used as scenery, being deposited about the stage as unimaginatively as the singing chorus in provincial opera productions. The actual choreography is a series of pretty steps which follow the music with facility but fail to add up to a composition with structure and style. As Columbine and the Good Fairy, Alicia Alonso and Irina Borowska created personal foci in this episodic ballet, which their alternates, Nina Novak and Yvonne Chouteau, did not accomplish. Eugene Slavin was Harlequin; Igor Youskevitch was Pierrot.

Columbine, Harlequin and Pierrot (Pagliacci) appeared again in BRdMC's third novelty, *A Tragedy in Calabria*, based on the play-within-the-play of the opera *I Pagliacci*. The pathos of grand opera, but not the grandeur, has been distilled into a pas de trois. Boutnikoff's orchestration of Leoncavallo arias is vulgar; whole passages of brisk, neo-classic choreography have been lifted from other ballets. The pathos, vulgarity and wise steals make this short ballet by Salvador Juarez considerably more interesting than Romanoff's and Danielian's more elegant but emptier efforts.

GEORGE JACKSON

Meet our Contributors

GEORGE JACKSON

Early childhood spent in Europe, primarily Austria where he was born in Vienna, Czechoslovakia, where his mother's family lived, and England, where he attended the Kingswood School in London. Since 1947, he has been at the University of Chicago, from which he received his high school certificate, A.B. and M.S. degrees and at present is completing work for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in biology.

Since 1954 he has been on the editorial staff of the literary quarterly *Chicago Review* and in the same year began writing for *Ballet Today*; also has had articles and poetry published in such magazines as *Folio*, *Intro Bulletin*, and *The Journal of Infectious Diseases*.

Prefers not to enlarge upon his background in ballet because " those from whom he learned probably disowned him when he began expressing his opinion in print."

(*Photo above*)

PARIS

THE evening of December 5th was a historic one at the Opéra in Paris. Serge Lifar danced *Giselle* for the last time with Yvette Chauviré and Claude Bessy as the Queen of the Wilis. The Opéra discarded the modern décor commissioned three years ago from the painter Carzou which had been considered too modern. There was thus a return to the old décors by Alexandre Benois. Serge Lifar wanted to surpass himself at this performance. He executed all the cabrioles and entrechats demanded by the choreography correctly. There were a dozen curtain calls. However, the great triumph of the evening was Yvette Chauviré who shone in both the first and second acts with a quiet, controlled, dazzling brilliance. The public ovation was fully merited. There was a reception in the foyer of the Opéra after the performance. Monsieur Georges Hirsch welcomed Serge Lifar and announced that if he was giving up the rôle of Prince Albrecht in *Giselle*, he would still continue to give his services to the Opéra as a choreographer and maître de ballet.

During December, a group of comedian-dancers appeared at the Théâtre de l'Etoile. They had come expressly from the Ivory Coast through the mediation of the Cercle Culturel et Folklorique of that country. The items presented by this group are entirely inspired by local folklore, and consist of a comedy of manners conjuring up the hatreds of the different tribes or else the drawbacks of matriarchal regimes where the woman is in command. All this is interspersed with warlike and ritual dances. These Africans perform on the stage with an astonishing assurance and a disarming simplicity. One is not insensitive to the savage beauty of these brown bodies, to the music of the tom-toms, the wooden cymbals and the cha-cha. Their costumes are a strange mixture. Among the women swathed in long dresses, the men hurled themselves around dressed only in their loin cloths, their faces bedaubed as well as their shields, all of which certainly gave local colour. The Ivory Coast ballets aroused much curiosity in Paris and had a remarkable success.

The Ballets Modernes de Paris founded and directed by Françoise and Dominique have just returned from a three week tour of the Belgian Congo and French Equatorial Africa. The company consists of the dancers Deryck Mendel, Jacqueline Sereville, Consolacion Villaube, Hélène Longuet, Pierre Franck, Jacqueline Toussainte and Robert Pomié, at one time a soloist at the Opéra. It was the first time that a European ballet company had performed in this part of Africa. The repertoire of the Ballets Modernes de Paris was enriched for the occasion by *Do-Ga-Di* a ballet by Igor Fosca and a pas-de-deux by Deryck Mendel.

Ram Gopal and his new Indian company performed at the Théâtre des Champs Elysées during the last weeks of December. This time, the Paris public seemed cool towards this spectacle. It was considered, in general, that Ram Gopal's performances of 1948 at this same theatre were much purer and less commercialised. The celebrated Indian dancer presented two programmes. The one was composed of separate items and the other consisted of a ballet in four scenes called *The Legend of the Taj Mahal* which had already been presented at the Edinburgh Festival. The complete ballet was a little better received by the Paris public but without great enthusiasm. In my opinion, Ram Gopal has been influenced by the western ballets, if I may put it that way, in the scene division and the staging etc. But these influences, due without doubt to all the means of communication available to us today, radio, television etc. are fatal and it would be naive indeed to imagine that Indian choreographic art would be unchanging. I have followed its evolution over thirty years ever since the first appearances of Uday Shankar in Paris and I have noticed a progressive change in the choice of subjects, for example. There are fewer divinities in the Indian productions presented since the end of the war. India is secularising its choreography and we see more of the nation, the men and women and human feelings rather than the gods themselves. In this sense, the complete ballet presented by Ram Gopal was of prime interest. The world changes, so why should the choreographic world of India not change ?

Luisillo and his company have just finished an excellent season at the Théâtre de l'Etoile. Luisillo is not content to be a great dancer, he wants to give Spanish folklore its place in the theatre. He has achieved this ambition. All the items in his programme are excellently produced and enhanced by undeniably artistic décors and costumes. The *Pregones Madrilenos*, a ballet which tells humourously of the life in a working class district with its standard types and *L'Aveugle*, a symbolic ballet created last year in Chicago, so very different one from another, bear witness to the skill of Luisillo the choreographer. Without being perfect of their kind these two ballets are very pleasing; brief in exposition and compact in expression. Luisillo as a performer is more brilliant than ever. Outstanding in his company are Maria Rosario, Teresa Amaya and Maria Vivo, a good flamenco singer.

FERDINAND REYNA

MONTE CARLO

This winter season we have much appreciated the programmes given by American Ballet Theatre. This company has the merit of having no " tail ", all members dancing finely and with an obvious enjoyment in their work. No new Ballets were produced and the repertoire contained such old favourites as *Giselle* and *Les Sylphides* mingled with *Billy the Kid* and *Fancy Free*. The modern Ballets were danced with such élan and conviction that even this stronghold of the old tradition was moved to applause. Hightower and Bruhn excelled in *Giselle*, but the appearance of the Wilis in sombre mourning veils was not generally approved. Serrano and Bruhn in the *Don Quixote* pas de deux were superb. Nora Kaye gave most moving performances in *The Streetcar Named Desire* and *Fall River Legend*, her facial expression and movement fully conveying the tragedy of these Ballets. Kriza used to full advantage his fine physique in portraying the virile, brutal, male. The delicate choreography of Dolin's *Pas de Quatre* was beautifully brought out by Hightower, Serrano, Ruth Ann Koesun and Christine Mayer. The décor of some of the Ballets was hardly up to the standard of the dancers.

The one night presentation of the very able Mime company of Marcel Marceau in the middle of the Ballet season left with some the question, " where does Mime end and modern Ballet begin? "

J. R. FARRINGTON

SAN FRANCISCO

On January 6, the San Francisco Ballet commenced a three month's tour of eleven countries in the Orient and Europe. In so doing this company, long known and appreciated for its superior standing among the terpsichorean organizations of the country, crowns its own many achievements in the twenty-three years since it was organized.

The tour is being made possible by the International Exchange Programme of the American National Theatre and Academy.

Ballets to be performed on the forthcoming tour will include *Con Amore*, a ballet in three scenes, music taken from three Rossini overtures; *The Dryad*, a ballet in two scenes, to the music of Schubert's Fantasia in F minor; *Jinx*, a ballet-satire on circus life, with music taken from Benjamin Britten's Variations on a Theme by Frank Bridge, and others.

Thirty members of the company have been selected for the tour which will include appearances in Okinawa, Hong Kong, Singapore, the Philippines, Indonesia, Ceylon, Burma, India, East and West Pakistan and possible performances in Europe. The personnel of the company will include the following soloists; Leon Danielian, Jocelyn Vollmar, Nancy Johnson, Sally Bailey, Christine Bering, Fiona Fuerstner, Virginia Johnson, Louise Lawler, Bene Arnold, Gloria Cancilla, Conrad Ludlow, Richard Carter and Gordon Paxman.

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LONDON BALLET MONTH

By

A. V. COTON

FOLK DANCING

THE annual New Year Festival of the English Folk Dance and Song Society is to be noted as an anthropological curiosity: people of one culture trying to perform dances from a culture which has completely died, and of which they have little understanding, and with a lack of elementary skill that is embarrassing to behold. No nation but the English *could* pretend that this sort of artificial respiration can bring the corpse back to life. What really intrigues the non-committed spectator year after year is—Why Do They Do It? The only answer that makes sense must be; that they do it for the same reason that 99 per cent of amateur actors take up amateur acting. Except that dancing is easier to learn than acting, and so there ought to be a level of performance that doesn't make one sweat with anxiety—in case some of the foreign participants (i.e. those from countries where there is a live folk-dancing tradition) burst out laughing at our native spectacles.

The Poles, for instance: they were not on view at the Albert Hall, but came into the Stoll Theatre later in January where they put on a show of dancing and singing which really told any observer a vast amount about the Polish way of life. The group is artificially composed, insofar as its members have been drawn from various employments, taught the best dances and songs (and they have to be *good* to be in this group), and spend their time in touring as a propaganda unit. But they *can* dance and sing, because they have learned the correct things to do, rehearse indefatigably and, above all, feel that their folk arts really belong to the present-day soil of Poland. Any community largely pastoral or agricultural in shape has preserved, more or less intact, the songs and dances of its ancestors, which are used spontaneously for celebrations of all kinds. These dances are done any day, or every day, in some part of Poland wherever there is a wedding, a christening, a funeral, or when somebody wins a prize, gets a promotion, or makes a fortune.

The programme is full of fascinations, for the shape of the dances and songs, their content, the attitude revealed between male and female, the degree of skill required—all these can tell us a lot about that old-fashioned concept, the " soul " of Poland. The processes of Nature, and of those who live and work close to her, do not change very quickly and Polish folk-arts still closely echo the ways in which the Pole feels and thinks about such important things as birth and death, love and sorrow, the disasters of common men and the courage of common people of all kinds.

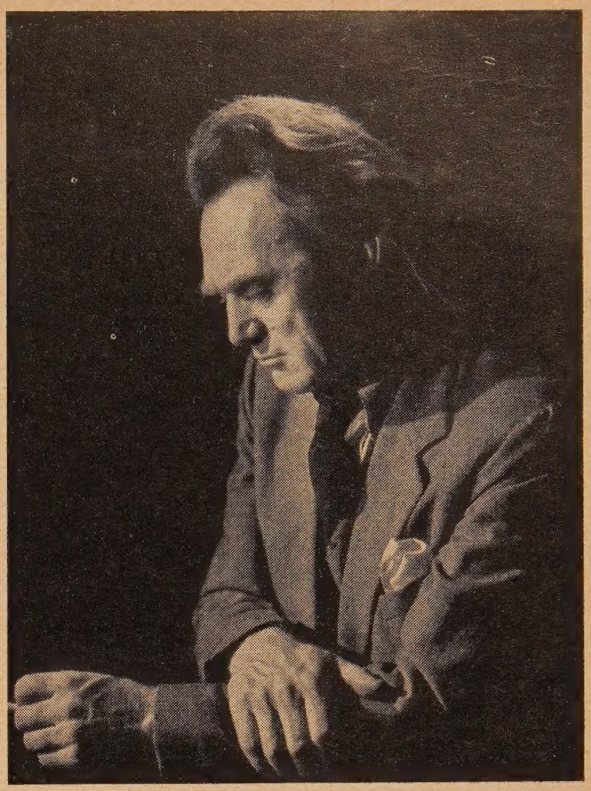
There are few signs of the English soul in the clodhopping morrises, the nursery-style hobby horses and the air of genteel " let's-play-at-being-common-people " that pervades English folk-dance circles, where the zenith of wit is attained through lots of hearty bum-slapping with bladders.

THE PRINCE OF THE PAGODAS

To go into deep analysis of the newest Covent Garden ballet, *The Prince of the Pagodas*, puts the critic in the role of a psychoanalyst beginning treatment of an abnormally abnormal patient; one can see what has gone wrong; one could suggest ways in which it might be put right (but it never will); one is mostly concerned with WHY it has gone so far wrong. Like the psychologist, one looks for a First Cause; was it Nanny or Papa or Mama or that terrible kindergarten that first set the patient on the wrong path? Does he really know the extent of his sickness, or is he—just the tiniest little bit—bluffing ?

First: a three-act ballet is not three one-act ballets held together by some kind of vague connecting link. It is a quite different sort of concept; as regards singleness of style, discipline of form, breadth of characterisation, accurate evocation of time and place, and originality of technical method, it must be planned as widely, as boldly, as intelligently, and as imaginatively, as a full-sized drama, opera, novel, symphony, epic poem. (One apologises for pointing out the obvious—that only an already matured artist of considerable originality ought to be entrusted with such a task, *particularly* when the occasion is the first of such an intended series).

Secondly: if we are to open a new era in ballet-making by reaching past the idioms and ideology of the Diaghilev Legacy (the one act ballet), the first incorrect conclusion to draw is that success can be attained by going back to pre-Diaghilev days for the formula for a full-length ballet. No three-act ballet yet to be made in England will



be much of an advance artistically if its subject-matter is to be drawn from that common pool of legends, fairytales and romances that was so thoroughly fished by 19th century choreographers.

Thirdly: because ballet makes its best successes when theme, decor, music and dancing are all blended imaginatively into the choreography, we should be aware that if the dancing is too diffuse or weak, the other components cannot save the day—or the choreographer's face. Without a certain flair in dance-composing which knows how often to avoid and how often to use the obvious, all choreography grows just complex enough to dull the watchers' interest. No amount of trick staging, costuming, decor or lighting can conceal pretentious dance arrangements; no music in the world can please our ears so well that we consent to shut our eyes to what is happening on the stage.

Fourthly: Fokine said, and it needs to be repeated by every dance critic every day for the next fifty years, that each new ballet requires a " new form (i.e. of dancing) corresponding to the subject ". However widely these words *form* and *subject* be translated, the choreography and the story-content of *Prince of the Pagodas* do not continuously, logically, and aesthetically blend together. The use of a supposedly naturalistic style of gesture by most of the participants in Act 1 is so uncouth that one is reminded of a group of non-professional actors trying to create effects without using words.

Fifthly (and by no means last): although one can find many morsels to admire here and there—a few costumes, some cunningly clever passages of characterisation in certain dances, much of the music, certain parts of the lighting and staging effects—a few good Parts do not make one good Whole. The supposed skill by which Cranko

(*Continued at foot of col. 1, page 8*)

Meet our Contributors

A. V. COTON. Critic, lecturer, broadcaster on Theatre, particularly on all forms of Theatre Dance, since 1935. Now Dance critic for the *Daily Telegraph*, and author of *London Ballet Month* for Ballet Today. (photo by Baron).

Works: *A Prejudice for Ballet. The New Ballet.*

In preparation: *Russian Ballet and the West.*

Music

New Recordings By BEDFORD CROWLE

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY (*Tchaikovsky*). *Minneapolis S.O.* (*Dorati*). *Mercury MRL* 2524–7.

It is really thrilling to be able to play the full *Sleeping Beauty* and Mercury have now made this possible and given us a good performance and a bright recording. I feel that four discs is spreading it unnecessarily but we must be thankful to have it all. It is bound to be popular amongst ballet-goers and even many who already have the excellent Irving discs, HMV. CLP1073–4, may buy these as well. Dorati's is, quite rightly, a concert performance, so that many of the tempi are strange to our ears. Some are perhaps a little too unballetic but we need more full-length ballet recordings and I therefore hope the ballet world will rally round.

LES NOCES, and MASS (*Stravinsky*). *Netherland Chamber Choir, etc.* (*Nobel*). *Philips ABL*3124.

Nijinska's ballet, *Les Noces*, had a mainly hostile reception in London, though it fared much better on the Continent. The limitations of, and imposed by the music, the ultra-modern style of choreography depicting ancient traditions, seem to be too much for the central idea of a peasant wedding. His Mass on the reverse is very different and moments of real beauty shine through its transparent sincerity. Both are well performed and recorded.

LONDON BALLET MONTH (*continued from page 7*)

tells the story without having to put in a long synopsis is vitiated by the fact that the explanatory " characterisation acts " by, for instance, Dwarf, Emperor, Belle Epine, the Four Kings, are stuffed with *cliches* of gesture, facial expression and movement, from a dozen earlier ballets of this repertoire.

Either the choreographer could not communicate what he precisely wanted from designer, composer and dancers : or else some or all of them could not accept his vision of what the ballet ought to grow into: or his concept of what the story should say to us and how it should say it was never really clarified through all the years of preparation; or (largest error in planning) his talent was never smoothed, guided, urged or restrained by some artistic supervisor with twenty times his experience . . . It has cost the taxpayer roughly £24,000 and apparently someone in authority feels that the Arts Council can indefinitely stand this modest sort of expenditure on near-failures in this great era of British Ballet.

SYMPHONIES NO. 40 AND NO. 33 (*Mozart*). *Vienna P.O.* (*Münchinger*). *Decca LXT*5124.

Mozart is coming more and more into the balletic field and the Americans are not slow in appreciating the numerous possibilities. Pittman Cory won considerable success with his ballet, *Rococo Symphony*, set to the G minor, at the Atlanta Festival. What heavenly music! Münchinger, who gives a very fine performance of the B Flat, fails, to my ear, to get enough mystery into the first movement or variation in repeated phrases in the fourth. Opinions might differ but the recording is good.

SONATA NO. 11 and PIANO CONCERTO NO. 27 (*Mozart*). *Wilhelm Backhaus* (*piano*), *Vienna P.O.* (*Böhm*). *Decca LXT*5123.

Even though the Bi-Centenary has only just passed, does one ever hear too much Mozart? Certainly not when in the theatre watching Ted Bollender's *Seraglio*—a ballet based on the slightest of themes, built up with great simplicity of pure classical steps and arranged with utmost charm. Completely in keeping with the " Alla Turca " sonata, which Backhaus plays so well and is clearly recorded. With it, is the last and one of the most enchanting of this composer's piano concertos—a delightful record.

VIOLIN CONCERTO NO. 3 (*Mozart*) and NO. 2 (*Prokofiev*). *Leonid Kogan* (*violin*), *Philharmonia Orchestra* (*Ackermann*). *Columbia* 33*CX*1395.

Ballet Theatre gave John Taras his first real opportunity when his *Graziana* was staged in 1945 and the years have proved his worth. The Mozart concerto, which he choreographed, is given a fair performance in the hands of the young Russian violinist but I prefer Grumiaux on Phillps ABL3080. However, the coupling which is the only recording of Prokofiev's second may influence your choice.

CAPRICCIO ESPAGNOL (*Rimsky-Korsakov*) and SYMPHONY NO. 1 (*Borodin*). *Philharmonia Orchestra* (*Galliera*). *Columbia* 33*CX*1356.

I have had a lot of enjoyment from this record and I am sure it will give the same pleasure to my readers. The *Capriccio* has been choreographed by Massine, Amaya, Greco and many others and if you want it for your ballet record library, then here you will also have the delight of Borodin's First. It may not equal his Second but does that matter? I strongly recommend you to hear this only LP recording.

EIGHT ENGLISH DANCES (*Arnold*). *L.P.O.* (*Boult*). *Decca LW*5166.

For those who want a souvenir of Kenneth MacMillan's ballet, *Solitaire*, this disc is the answer. Sir Adrian Boult and the L.P.O. have completely captured the intentions of this rising composer. It does not, of course, include the two additional dances he wrote specially for Sara Neil's polka and the pas de deux.

HANDEL'S WATER MUSIC.

I think that the last time this great music was used for ballet, was when Lifar staged his *Divertissement à la Cour* at Monte Carlo early last year, but there have been many other occasions including Andrée Howard's *Suite of Dances*. Boult's conducting of the complete work on Nixa NCL16017 is certainly the best to date, and it is enhanced by C. Taylor's playing of the recorder. If however you must be content with just a suite, then Harty's on Decca LW5263 with Beinum conducting the L.P.O., is good.

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Review

At the Theatres By MONTAGUE CALMAN

A TRIPLE FIRST

AT forty-three Britten is one of Britain's outstanding composers. Unlike many he can compose a beautifully melodic phrase. And can claim to be one of the world's most economical composers. Rarely does he waste a note.

On the first day of this year we heard for the first time his first specially written score for the full length ballet *The Prince of the Pagodas*.

If Britten failed to write a great score for this ballet it still does not diminish the Royal Opera House enterprise in commissioning this talented composer to undertake the task.

I believe that most creative artists are subjected to the social atmosphere and general environment of their times. Britten himself is deeply conscious of the cadences of life and the varying ebbs of humanity. His *Peter Grimes* and *Billy Budd* are operas stamped with the genius of humanity and psychological understanding. He is too sensitive an artist, I feel, to climb into the fairy world of a green salamander and a flying-in-the-air princess when the world is torn by various conflicts.

In *The Prince of the Pagodas* Cranko's scenario and choreography fail to create the emotional atmosphere which I believe makes Britten's genius flourish.

AN OLD JOKE

The actual score for this overlong ballet begins with a cymbal crash confusing the audience who then expect the National Anthem. It is an old joke and I wonder why Britten bothered.

Characteristic of Britten is the percussive writing and lyrical flows for woodwinds. And as so often when this master of chamber ensemble writing faces a huge orchestra, the large forces are rarely used.

Benjamin Britten can provide warm, romantic music but he rarely can saturate with lush heavily orchestrated sounds.

I do not think the watery effects of the music are typical Britten nor do I feel they are likely to invite comparisons with the great Tchaikovsky works—*Swan Lake* and *Sleeping Beauty*. There romance and fairyland were inscribed in every note.

THINKING AHEAD ?

But I do not blame Britten for failing but rather the age in which we live. Who can, or should, write in the romantic vein of an age gone by ? Therein lies the present weakness of British ballet.

Choreographer Cranko—and even more so Ashton—seems determined to delve deeper into the realms of mythology and the fairyland world. Why do they ignore the wealth of drama lying on the modern doorstep ? Life today either in tragedy or in comedy is theirs to recreate in ballet form. Dance movements and mime can psychologically state many of the complexities of modern life.

And only when it does will composers be sufficiently inspired to write scores to equal the great ballet music of the past.

For me Britten failed in his first ballet but the fault lies not in his brilliant mind but in the folly of those who choose the ideas for twentieth century ballets.

WELCOME TO ALWYN

I congratulate Covent Garden Administrator David Webster on finding a new conductor for the Sadler's Wells Ballet. Unusually modest, Webster has kept the news quiet. But I heard the debut of accompanist Kenneth Alwyn when he conducted a performance of *Sleeping Beauty* (with Grey) at the Royal Opera House recently.

Scrupulously attentive to the dancers, Alwyn still managed to musicianly phrase every passage of this noble Tchaikovsky score. Within the frame-work of the dancers' needs he wove a fine carpet of sound. Sparing of gesture but firm in his demands, this young conductor secured warm playing from the strings and brilliant effects from the woodwinds and brass sections of the orchestra.

Let us now hope both Webster and music adviser Robert Irving take heart from their new find and encourage many more unknown young conductors. Kenneth Alwyn seems already to repay their trust.

THE POLISH DANCERS

In this age of State grants my 1957 hero is impresario Peter Daubeny. Like Thomas Cook he brings the world closer to Englishmen—only he makes the artists do the travelling. And like some knight of old he penetrates the iron curtains and through the cultural chinks brings out varied forms of entertainment.

The Polish State Dance Company—*The Mazowsze*—is Daubeny's latest importation to the Stoll Theatre. It is a well schooled company and has a mixed choir, disciplined but a trifle too lusty in its vocal vigour.

After the final curtain at the first night of The Prince of the Pagodas. *L-R: David Blair, Benjamin Britten, Svetlana Beriosova and John Cranko.*

Most of the melodies of this repertoire spring from Mazovia (Mazowsze), a Polish district, famous perhaps for the birth of the *mazurka*. This may account for the lack of variety in the programme. " Much too much of the same all the evening," was my friend's comment.

The tunes themselves were pleasant enough but sound far more Strauss—Vienna Waltzes—than Chopin in origin. And despite the difference in titles the music said little. For instance no matter whether it was a lover's lament or a single girl's cheery call, the smiling singers and the syrupy music gave no indication of mood change.

Besides the pit orchestra conducted by Stefan Zulawa and Stanislaw Wysocki, there were for some items a touring stage band. Two violins, a clarinet and a recorder joined a very active double bass. The bass was fixed onto a rubber castor. Everytime the player bobbed the bass up and down it tinkled a bell fixed onto the bridge of the instrument.

MORE SPANISH

To add to the overflow of Spanish dance entertainments recently, Angelo Andes and Nady Santander gave a recital with the New English Players at the Rudolf Steiner Theatre. Most of Andes' time is spent touring (with Arts Council backing) the outposts of culture outside London, from Cornwall and Devon to the remoter areas of Lincolnshire.

Even if this is not a London West-End show it serves those outside a larger city whose only contact with Spanish dancing is the television or the cinema screens.

MAKING HISTORY

The other week I was very happy to be a guest of the Westminster Corporation when Markova unveiled a plaque commemorating the opening of the Pavlova Memorial Library now housed with the rest of Westminster's superb ballet library. Anyone interested in ballet must visit this library—in St. Martin's Street, London, W.C.2. It is open from 10 a.m. until 8 p.m. every week day.

It all began with Balletomania

A pen portrait of

Arnold Haskell

Director of the Royal Ballet School

ARNOLD HASKELL, a small, retiring man, with deep-set eyes, greying hair decidedly thin on top, and a quiet, diffident, almost furtive manner, has in the course of some thirty years, established his position in this country as the King of Balletomanes. He has been quoted as saying that he was born " interested in Ballet ". Certainly few can claim to have followed a hobby so consistently, or to have understood so skilfully how to turn their hobby into a means of livelihood without the actual drudgery of becoming a professional performer.

When the brilliant Russians came to London in the days before the first world War, young Haskell would skip school rather than miss one of their performances. This undoubtedly laid the foundations of his taste, and gave him the elements on which to base his critical judgment. He was scarcely out of his teens when an exceptionally gifted child-dancer named Markova came to his notice, and it was while she was being auditioned by the great Russian impresario that he, as her escort, met Diaghilev. It was an important landmark in Markova's life, though it did not lead to any immediate links between Haskell and the Russian company. That was to come later, when Haskell joined de Basil, and re-encountered many members of the former Diaghilev group, as well as the new baby ballerinas the Colonel had so much luck in discovering. He made two world tours with the de Basil company, and the result was a book called " Balletomania ", in which he recorded his recollections of Diaghilev and his experiences as a shining star in the constellation which forms the " comet's tail " following a brilliantly popular ballet company around.

Actually he did not invent the word balletomane. He imported it from Russia, where the cultured and highly sophisticated dilettante of the ballet world had some time before been christened by that name. It " caught on " in this country, and as its literary godfather by adoption, Arnold Haskell soon became the King of that brave band of pioneers who had the courage to champion ballet while it was still regarded as being effeminate and somewhat " peculiar ".

" Balletomania ", though not by any means his first book, proved to be his first best-seller. It did much to alter the attitude of the general public towards ballet, and when, in 1930, Arnold Haskell became co-founder of the Camargo Society, his prestige was already widely recognised. Just before the second world War, he cemented this by writing " Ballet ", which was published by Pelican Books. It has run into so many Editions that he has forgotten the exact number; certainly the number of copies printed runs into a million, and it has been translated into every living language—including Japanese ! Whilst travelling round with ballet companies he also secured lecture engagements, and he has given talks in five continents.

All this activity came to a completely constructive climax when the Sadler's Wells Ballet School was founded, and he joined the teaching staff, in charge of background culture. He also automatically became the school's propagandist.

On a recent occasion, when he gave a Press Conference for the benefit of some selected Ballet Correspondents, he stated that only 8 per cent of all the candidates who applied for admission to the school were accepted. Asked whether the logical consequence would be a " closed shop " to everyone—dancers, choreographers and so on—who were not " Sadler's Wells trained ", he strenuously denied this. Every National company of any note, he said, has its own training organisation. Only in this way is it possible to arrive at a completely homogeneous group, and all the dancers taking part in a State Ballet have to belong to that group, unless they are invited as guest-artists. Actually, Sadler's Wells is *less* closed than these State-controlled ballet companies.

And would that eventually close up all the other ballet schools ? " Not at all," he replied. " Covent Garden and Sadler's Wells can only absorb a strictly limited number at any given time, and it is only necessary to make up the numbers when this or that dancer drops out, on marriage, or for some other reason. But there are outlets in plenty for graduates from all established ballet schools. Sadler's Wells is not in competition with any other school; it is always pleased to accept candidates that come from other schools, provided they are up to standard. This monopoly idea is completely false thinking."

He went on to enlarge on the advantage the Sadler's Wells method of training gives children even if they do not eventually take up Ballet as a career.

The Junior School at Richmond is in the nature of an ordinary grammar school, where ballet is one of the subjects. Education is also carried on in the Senior School where the main emphasis is on art in general, musical appreciation, English, history and literature, all of which subjects Mr. Haskell himself supervises.

The Junior School looks after the needs of children until they reach the age when career-thinking starts, and by this time the preliminary training has enabled teachers to detect whether it would be worth a child adopting a course of ballet training or not. But even if the pupil has not the exceptional qualities essential to success in Ballet, the preliminary preparation is not wasted. If dancing other than ballet is taken up, there is scope in all branches of entertainment. Or, leaving dancing aside, the discipline of a school where the emphasis is laid on general culture, as at Richmond, can be immensely serviceable to potential Art students, to teachers specialising in remedial exercises and kindred subjects, to fashion models, and even to those who elect to follow an athletic career. The link between athletics and ballet is becoming ever closer, especially for men; the exercises are naturally adapted to their special needs, and the results have already proved striking.

Asked what he considered to be the most important development in ballet during past years, Mr. Haskell replied that in his opinion it lay in the steady growth of a well-informed ballet public. Ballet was no longer considered to be a highly specialised hot-house product which hid its mysteries from all but the favoured few. It was a thing everyone could enjoy, and with greater understanding, pleasure increased. He also thought the time had come when we should cease to expect English dancers to " dance like Russians ". We are developing our own definitely national style.

Interview by **ELISABETHE CORATHIEL**

Photo : Arnold Haskell and Miss L. M. McCutcheon, Headmistress, in her study at The Royal Ballet Lower School at White Lodge, Richmond Park, Surrey.

DAVID BLAIR AND SVETLANA BERIOSOVA

Prince of the Pagodas *Photo: Tony Armstrong Jones*

First performed at th
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Music by
Choreography an
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Act I. *The Court of the Emper*
The four Kings anxious to r
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Rose, the younger daughter,
beauty and simplicity for her
of the Pagodas sends her his m
casket containing a rose.

Act II. *Belle Rose's strange*
Scene 1.
The messengers take her o
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land where live the Rulers of

Scene II. *The arrival and adve*
the Pagodas.
Belle Rose is unhappy in th
that her lover is a Green Salar

The Prince

Act III. *The Court of the Emp*

Scene I.

They both return to her f
ex-Emperor is being cruelly i
Empress. The Green Salama
Belle Epine. He wins the l
magic kiss which is needed t
of the Pagodas.

Scene II. The marriage of Be

All photographs U

Top left: *The Emperor's Pal*
Belle Epine (*Julia Farron*).

Below: *Moonrise. Anya Lind*

Top right: *In the Land of the*
the love of Belle Rose.

Below: *The Wedding of Belle*
of the Pagodas (*David Blair*).

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Ballet

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FLEMMING FLINDT

Photo: Hamilton Walter

MEN IN BALLET

Flemming Flindt

By SONIA ROBERTS

FOR Flemming Flindt, the dashing Dane with the smile as bright as a toothpaste advertisement, the door of opportunity, not to say stardom has opened remarkably early, even for the world of ballet where youthful vigour is at a premium. Many young people might feel tempted to boast of their rapid achievement, but Flemming Flindt is modest, even hesitant, about his success. " It is not for me to say how much I have progressed in the past year " he replied, " that is the prerogative of the audience. I can only say that being able to dance nearly every night has given me confidence I would not have thought possible a year ago. It was a very lucky break for me to be given leading roles by Festival Ballet at the age of nineteen."

Unlike the rest of the company, there is no litter of mascots on Flemming Flindt's dressing table. " Oh there are a few odd things in the bottom of my costume basket " he admitted, " but I do not really believe in mascot luck. A year ago I wasn't superstious at all, but Toni Lander has so many superstitions in the theatre, and although at first I used to laugh, now I find these things catching."

Although Flindt apologises profusely for the quality of his English, he speaks the language flawlessly with only a trace of accent, so that it is easy to forget his nationality.

He was in fact born in Copenhagen and is the second son of a family of four, all boys. His father owns a night club and Flindt thinks that if he had not become a dancer he might have gone into the hotel business. " I am very much attracted by business—the buying, selling and the idea of meeting new people. I think the hotel business might have suited me very well—but of course the question of another profession never arose because I joined the Royal Danish Ballet School when I was ten." In taking up dancing Flindt was following in his mother's footsteps, because for twenty-five years she ran a school of ballroom dancing, and this was Flindt's first introduction to dancing. Although he no longer cares for ballroom dancing, he can still be persuaded to engage in the mambo at a party or even rock and roll if that is what the band happen to be playing at the time.

When it comes to music however his tastes are severely toward the classics. Beethoven, Bach and Mozart are the top favourites and it is one of Flemming Flindt's constant regrets that so much of ballet music is not of top quality.

In ballet too he prefers to see the classics performed but his favourite ballet is *Etudes* both to dance in and to see performed. When he wants to watch ballet it must be the best of its kind and well performed, or he becomes restless. However in his opinion it is the classical pas de deux that most truly expresses ballet art in its highest form.

It was in order to have more experience of dancing leading roles that Flemming Flindt decided to leave his native land. Owing to the fewer number of performances at home he might well have had to wait many years before being allowed to dance the roles in which he now appears. Although this system has the tendency to impede the progress of ambitious youngsters like himself, Flindt does feel that a State-run ballet company has great advantages in the matter of offering longer rehearsal time to perfect new productions.

He has nothing but praise for the friendly way he was received into Festival Ballet by the other dancers, and he has acquired a deep love of London.

Flemming Flindt is one of those dancers who feel that his performances benefit if he can find a few moments for quiet concentration before he goes on. However he is not dogmatic about the need for this. " For me I think it is necessary, perhaps for other people this is not so."

Finally I asked if any of the other members of the family were likely to follow their big brother's lead and become dancers. " Well, one of the two little ones does dancing," said Flindt with some pride, " but at present he divides his spare time between dancing and painting and no one in the family is quite certain which will win."

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SPANISH DANCERS AND DANCING

GRECO

CRITICS and public alike have fallen into the trap of attempting to compare Antonio and José Greco. Even if such comparisons could be made, I very much doubt if their value would be any greater than a comparison between, for example, Fonteyn's Odette-Odile and Ulanova's Giselle. Antonio has delighted our five senses with a brilliant and dazzling spectacle and has now left our shores. Let us cherish the memory of him, resolve to give him the welcome he deserves when he returns to us (and may this be soon) but let us not try to fit in other great ones such as José Greco with the pattern which Antonio created for us.

To see in José Greco a virtuoso or an impressionistic interpreter of the Spanish dance is to miss the whole point. He is a sophisticated intellectual, so profoundly versed in the traditional heritage of Spain and understanding it so completely that he could well have become the sort of Professor under whom any student of history, philosophy or literature would delight to study. It is only when we see him in this light that we can hope to appreciate him.

In any case, I tear my hair whenever I read these multifarious reports which serve only to show that the writers of them know little or nothing of the folklore, the literature, the history, the traditional art and very little about the music of Spain, all of which they seem to think can be acquired in an annual summer holiday in Seville and Cordoba. During a period of two years I lived, on and off, among the dancing gypsies of Andalusia. With a horribly English accent I speak their dialect. Hardly a week goes by that I do not hear from at least one of them. Yet it was only as I talked with Greco that I realised how very little of all this I have even begun to understand.

" Every region of Spain " Greco pointed out " has its own traditional art. Every aspect of it is inspired by different conditions, different circumstances and even different temperaments. Some of it is truly artistic. Some of it is, to be quite frank, vulgar. Those of us who have taken it upon ourselves to preserve the traditions of Spain have to determine what is of real cultural value and present it in an understanding way.

"Provided it is presented in sincerity and with understanding it can be appreciated anywhere; in Spain, here in London, in New York. What does it matter that Dostoievski wrote in Russia, that Garcia Lorca wrote in Spain ? Their appeal is universal because they understood the traditions they sought to express."

" No," he went on in answer to my question. " I never knew Lorca personally but he was a very great friend of the bullfighter Ignacio Sanchez Mejias and La Argentinita, and they both talked about him so much that it was almost as if I had known him. Lorca not only understood the traditions of Spain, he felt them. I have a whole programme of works inspired by Lorca but, you will appreciate, I have to keep a balanced programme.

You have seen two ballets inspired by Lorca in my present repertoire; the *Cana y Petenera* which is the final sequence of a much longer ballet and, of course, *Anda Jaleo*."

And my mind went back to his recitation of this verse which he has blended with the dance. Personally I like to think that the item *Cantiga* is inspired by Lorca's famous Lament for Ignacio Sanchez Mejias.

" Lorca " Greco continued " knew and understood that unspeakable sadness which has got to be relieved even though the very relieving of it is painful. It's like when you cry. It's painful but it's a relief." He turned to me.

" When you were in Spain," he went on, " you saw what we are like. One day life is wonderful. The next day the world may not be such a good place. I'm like that. My company is like that. I don't know why. It's just the way we are."

Personally, I have grown to love this aspect of the Spanish temperament too well to make any comment. Of one thing I am sure. Were it not for this acute hypersensitivity the traditional art of Spain as we observe it could not exist.

" One thing we must never lose sight of," Greco told me, " is our responsibility towards the present generation. We must respect the past, of course, but imagine a child walking down the street with his grandfather. They can't look at life from the same angle. But what they can and should do is to respect and try and understand each other's generation.

"Every single member of my company I respect. How do I know that any one of them may not be destined for greatness ? Nothing surprises me any more. I've seen people who everyone said hadn't the talent or even the looks of a dancer, that they should go away to some office where they belonged, suddenly become great names. Where do they hide that streak of genius ? What is it that brings it out ?

" If it comes to that, who would have thought that I, with my village background, would one day be entrusted with this position of responsibility. And it is a responsibility; to my company, to those who

(*Continued at foot of next column*)

LUISILLO

FANNY ELSLER, at the height of the Romantic period, was the first to discover the immense possibilities of Spanish dancing and to apply them balletically; but it remained for La Argentinita in the 1920's to open up a new field of exploration by refining various regional peasant dances and presenting them in a form highly acceptable to popular audiences.

Argentinita brought to the task all the resources of her own ballet training. But she never tired of emphasising the true classical elements inherent in the steps and patterns of Spanish peasant dances. The speculation this arouses is exciting. Are these village votaries instinctively artistic (for they dance from earliest childhood and their Art certainly has no ballet-school to thank for its spontaneity), or can it be that they owe their inherited skill to age-old race memories, justifying the theory that the pure pedigree of ballet should actually be traced through Spain, despite the indifference of French ballet-masters to Spanish dance-forms until Fanny Elsler revealed their fascination ?

We have the authority of writers like Horace, Juvenal, Pliny and many others for the high esteem in which " dancers from Cades " (the Cadiz of today) were held by voluptuous Roman banqueters. Dances like the Fandango, the Malagueña, and so on, almost certainly go back to originals which delighted the ancient Romans. Who can say what influence they may not have had upon the airs and graces of Court etiquette which, after the fall of Rome, passed over to the highly complicated Byzantine ceremonial, and came back with the Renaissance, to blossom finally in the dancing divertissements of Louis XIV under the direct sponsorship of the Italian Medici, Queen Catherine ?

However this may be, the ancient folk dances of Spain have always retained a highly individual character. They allow each dancer the greatest possible liberty for self-expression. This leads to improvisation and stimulates competition. Traditionally, the accompaniment is provided by a piper and a drummer whose not-very-melodious contributions serve mainly to accent the rhythm; it is anything but a noisy background for the dance. But in this comparative silence the castanets speak, the heel-taps and foot-beats become eloquent. To the superficial observer it may appear that the " dialogue " of stamping and clapping between male and female is nothing more than a panto-mime of the eternal attraction and repulsion inherent in the sex-theme; but actually, the rhythm of the dance, which corresponds to the life-impulse in all living things, can express an almost limitless range of emotions. Shortly before she died, Argentinita told me that the folk-dances of Spain attracted her chiefly on account of their deep religious feeling. At that time—more than twenty years ago—it sounded strange to English ears that religion and dancing should be bracketed together.

Yet precisely this line of thought is the underlying motif in some of the most striking work of Luisillo's Spanish Dance Theatre repertory. To the Spaniard there is nothing at all remarkable about this; he takes his religion for granted.

For instance, it is safe to say that the remarkably successful *Gigantes y Cabezudos* tickled the imagination of London audiences by the apparent incongruity of introducing dancing into a religious procession. It was all so spontaneous—so intriguing that the altar boys should dance, and that even the Priest could scarcely refrain from joining in, yet without the slightest hint of irreverence. In comparison, the Giants and Big Heads, which were the real theme of the ballet from the Spanish standpoint, made almost no impression. The finer shades of meaning escaped the London audience, but the dancing satisfied on its own account. That we should find anything strange about people dancing in the midst of a religious festival must have been a great surprise to the all-Spanish company !

" In Spain, we do not regard religion and dancing as being mutually antagonistic," Luisillo told me. " Dancing is so integral a part of peoples' lives that any attempt to suppress it would be foredoomed to failure, anyway—so the Church permits it, as it permits any other means of up-lift, and on many occasions the Dance has played a decisive part in national crises. For instance, the opening of the world-famous Council of Trent, at which so many important religious problems were to be debated, was preceded by a great dance festival, organised in honour of Philip II of Spain, with the sanction of the Pope. Another Pope, in 1430, authorised the Cathedral of Seville to institute a Dance of the Altar Boys, called The Sixteen, who perform in the sanctuary on special Church feasts, like Corpus Christi, to this day."

Luisillo read in BALLET TODAY the account of the mediaeval Folk Festival known as the Landshut Wedding, and he said he felt sure people going abroad would like to time their visits to coincide with similar festivals in other places, if only they knew beforehand when such celebrations were taking place.

" The Giants and Big-Heads, on which my ballet is based, are typical figures in the province of Aragon, where, despite the fact that the people are reputed to have an inflated opinion of their own importance, and to be particularly obstinate, they yet have enough humour to laugh at themselves, hence these more than life-size caricatures. The figures appear at all the big Church Festivals, which are invariably followed by dancing. A date to note is October 12th, which each year is observed as " The Day of the Race " (or clan) in the town of Saragossa. Our Lady of the Pillar, a very tiny Virgin mounted on a very tall column is the Patroness of the town, and after the morning procession in her honour, the whole place is given over to dancing, just as we see it in the Ballet."

Mr. Luisillo drew from a drawer in his dressing table a volume, beautifully illustrated, dealing with fascinating historic customs in all the provinces of Spain. He evidently regards it as his " Bible ". " It is packed with material I hope eventually to use in ballets," he said. " A great many of them are semi-religious in character, but they are highly dramatic, too, and could be admirably transferred to the stage. I think the time has come when we may look to more serious sources for our entertainment—it gives one a better understanding of our fellow-men."

ELISABETHE CORATHIEL

GRECO—*Continued from previous page*

risk vast sums of money on me and to the people who come to see me. Why should it be me ? I don't know the answer."

Perhaps, Mr. Greco, I might make a suggestion. Could it not be due, in great measure, to your all important and impressive artistic integrity and sincerity of purpose ? I like to think that, even in these days when the rave notices of the popular press are, all too often, snatched by the dazzling virtuoso, the public still know how to appreciate these qualities.

DAVID BENN

Opposite page
GRECO

Above:
LUISILLO

Right:
NILA AMPARO and
LOLA DE RONDA

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Ninette De Valois
Photo: Houston Rogers

BALLET QUIZ

ANSWERS TO LAST MONTH'S COMPETITION

Well-known Personalities

QUIZ No. 1
Edris Stannis—better known as Ninette de Valois

QUIZ No. 2
Violetta Prokhorova—Elvin

Violetta Elvin
Photo: Houston Rogers

QUIZ No. 3

(a) *The Ballerinas Shoemakers*—ANELLO & DAVIDE

who have presented a prize of a pair of Ballet Shoes to Morag Forbes, 25, Dalrymple Crescent, Edinburgh, 9.

(b) *The perfume created for ballet goers and dancers*

TUTU—Saville Perfumery Ltd.

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(c) *The jigsaw depicting famous dancers*—DANCERS OF BALI made by JOHN WADDINGTON

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Miss Monica Price, 28, Bear Close, Woodstock, Oxon.

Miss I. Urquhart, 172, Crown Street, Aberdeen, Scotland.

Miss Margaret Exley, 8, Parkleigh Drive, New Moston, Manchester 10.

(d) *The supplier of nylon stretch tights*—MAISON FABIOLA

who have presented a prize to Miss J. R. Peck, 31, Vineyard Hill Road, Wimbledon Park, S.W.19.

(e) *The Publisher generally associated with the highest output of ballet books each year*—A. & C. BLACK

who have presented a copy of their new book *Ballet Decade* to Mrs. Anna Patela, 153, Wheeler Street, Lozells, Birmingham 19.

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BOOKS

Reviewed by
PIGEON CROWLE

Fanny Cerrito. By Ivor-Guest. (*Phoenix House*, 30*s.*)

In the lithograph from Chalon's drawing of the famous Pas de Quatre, Fanny Cerrito always seems a little different from the other three. Somewhat rounder in figure, with a single flower in her sleek hair, she does not join in the concert of wistful smiles, but turns her head over her shoulder and gazes at the audience with a provocative expression. But was she different, and in what way? Up to now we have known comparatively little about Fanny Cerrito; far less, certainly, than we know of Taglioni or Grisi. Yet she was the darling of her beloved English audience, and here she had her greatest successes, so it is fitting that an English writer should give us the first full account of her life and career.

This book has been compiled after much patient research, and with scholarly care and devotion. The illustrations are exceptional and as a book of reference it is invaluable, and an acquisition for all lovers of ballet.

The story is one of brilliant success with few sorrows and a path that was literally strewn with flowers. As a person, Fanny appears to have been witty, gentle and generous, with the strong will of all great dancers. As a dancer, she was more notable for the warmth and vitality of her style, her ease and lightness, and a certain artless spontaneity than for perfection of technique. The reviewer in a contemporary ballet magazine asks what exactly were the " circling movements " or " whirling and flying motions " with which she electrified her audience. After much careful reading of the descriptions, I would like to suggest that these were coupés jetés en ronde, and to ask in my turn what was the favourite partnered movement, variously described, in which she was " guided through the air " ? Was it one of those gentle floating series of lifts we associate today with the choreography of Frederick Ashton ?

In following the career of this famous ballerina, we are afforded many intriguing glimpses of the social and theatrical background of the times, when members of both Houses of Parliament would stream in from a sitting as the orchestra struck up the opening bars of a popular ballet, and occupants of the stage box leapt onto the boards to defy the manager or reverently kiss the ribbons of the ballerina's shoes.

The long years of her retirement were happy, and when the last surviving dancer of the Pas de Quatre died in 1909 the Diaghilev Company, only a few miles away, were rehearsing for their first Paris season.

I would like to add a little postscript of my own. One of Diaghilev's productions for this visit was *Les Sylphides* with Pavlova and Karsavina —immortal tribute to the Romantic Age. Karsavina had studied under the great Pavel Gerdt who had so often watched Cerrito in *Ondine* perform her famous Shadow Dance. This dance he carefully taught his favourite pupil, evoking in her the feeling of " succession ". A dancer's memory is long. If Karsavina could be persuaded to teach these steps to one of our ballerinas, the art of Cerrito might live again—a romantic thought!

The Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet. Ed. Hugh Fisher. (*A. & C. Black*, 12*s.* 6*d.*)

This is a good record, well illustrated of the company's work during the last ten years from the date of its first performance on 8th April, 1946, In turning the pages, one's feelings become a little nostalgic—Heaton in *Khadra*, Carter in *The Catch*, Poole as Pierrot, Zullig as the poet in *Selina*, Miller as Beauty, Beriosova, Blair and Holden in *Assembly Ball* and so recently, it seems, Fifield as Poll—where, indeed, are the sorrows of even yesterday !

The composition of the Company, season by season, is given with details of its ballets and dancers, and a list of composers, choreographers, and designers who have worked for the Theatre Ballet. All in all, very comprehensive and up to date.

The Little Dancer. By Lorna Hill. (*Nelson*, 12*s.* 6*d.*)

The fortunes of Annette Dancy are continued in this well-told novel for the younger reader. The ballet student heroine is about to become a fully-fledged dancer and has the strength of mind to turn down her first Hollywood film offer. It is obvious that Lorna Hill knows and loves Scotland, and there is a delightful picture of Christmas in a small Border village, amusing glimpses of the American tenants of a castle in Skye, and the description of a thrilling mountain-climbing adventure during a film-making episode.

LIDO'S BALLET No. 6

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NOTTINGHAM

By DAVID BENN

During a recent visit to Nottingham I called on Miss Mary Nevin, Secretary and founder of the Nottingham Ballet Club. This club caters for a different need. Miss Nevin takes the view that since nearly all the ballet schools in Nottingham present their own annual show, there is hardly room for another production group in the city. The club therefore caters for those who are interested in ballet, whether as dancers or simply as spectators, and who would like to know more about it.

Ballet lovers in Nottingham know what they want. They want to see in Nottingham the personalities they read about, not only on stage but off-stage as well, and Miss Nevin tries whenever possible to get them as speakers. Despite the difficulties to which I referred in a previous article, over the last year speakers have included A. H. Franks, Leighton Lucas, Joan Lawson, Peggy van Praagh and Kenneth Rowell, and members were given the opportunity of meeting them.

When Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet and Ballet Rambert came to Nottingham Miss Nevin organised welcome parties for members of the companies, to which Club members were invited. When the ballet comes to a town within easy distance of Nottingham the club tries to arrange block bookings for its members. They have contemplated booking a coach excursion for these visits, but before this can be done they must be certain that the coach will carry its full capacity and not subsequently involve them in financial loss.

Of one thing I am certain, the interest in ballet is there. At bookshops and the Public Library I was assured that books on ballet are widely bought and consulted, especially by young people. When booking opened for the recent visit of Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet the queues extended right round the theatre. The theatre holds well over two thousand people. Where do these people get to for the rest of the year? Here is an organisation which can foster their interest and keep it alive.

I sincerely hope all readers will contact the clubs I have mentioned. A list of clubs was published in the December issue of BALLET TODAY. One thing is certain. If readers will take an interest in the clubs, their interest will be returned a hundredfold.

NEXT MONTH: LEEDS BALLET CLUB

CLUB NEWS

LONDON

The Association of Ballet Clubs gave a reception at the Holborn Town Hall to introduce the members of the various clubs to Beryl Grey, the new Association President. In welcoming Miss Grey, G. B. L. Wilson the Chairman told of his initiation into ballet. At the first performance he attended he was not particularly impressed, "except by a young girl in the back row with eyes like saucers". He thought her dancing was the most wonderful thing he had ever seen. After the show he wrote to her, and was surprised to receive a reply—not from Beryl herself, but from her father. He followed her progress through the years and they became firm friends. What he did not say, and it was very obvious to all those present, was that Beryl is the same delightful person to-day as she must have been then. Having made a speech that would have done credit to a city chairman, Beryl made it clear that not for her was the hurried appearance of a VIP; she got down to the job of meeting the members, stayed for almost two hours and looked as if she was enjoying every minute of it.

BOSTON, LINCS.

Mrs. G. Lancaster, Secretary of The Boston Arts & Crafts Society of 13, Pilgrim Road, Boston, Lincs., writes: "It is very difficult to maintain the interest in ballet here—let alone enlarge it—when we are so very rarely stimulated by the visit of any touring company. If only some of the subsidies could go to small companies, dancing small ballets suitable for small halls, instead of furthering large companies in large towns that are already catered for—it would do some real good to folk like ourselves." The most pressing need of this Club is for lecturers on ballet, and Mrs. Lancaster would be grateful if speakers would communicate with her at the above address.

NOTTINGHAM

Nottingham Ballet Club forthcoming events: March 27th, an illustrated talk on Spanish Dancing by David Benn; April 10th, Film Show. For details of time and place of meetings, write to Miss Nevin, 136, Munsters Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham.

BALLET GUIDE

THE ROYAL BALLET AT COVENT GARDEN

23rd	Feb.	Sat.	(mat)	*Sylvia* (Linden, Blair)
,,	,,	Sat.	(eve)	*Sylvia* (Fonteyn, Somes)
27th	,,	Wed.	(eve)	*The Lady and the Fool, Les Patineurs, The Firebird* (Fonteyn, Grey, Jackson, Beriosova, Farron, Page; Somes, Chatfield, Blair, Ashbridge, Clegg, Doyle, Hynd, Powell, Ashton)
1st	Mar.	Fri.	(eve)	*Coppelia* (Fifield, Shaw, Edwards)
2nd	,,	Sat.	(mat)	*Les Sylphides, The Firebird, Coppelia Act III* (Fonteyn, Jackson, Beriosova, Fifield, Lindsay, Grahame; Somes, Doyle, Edwards, Ashton)
,,	,,	Sat.	(eve)	*Coppelia* (Lane, Grant, White)
4th	,,	Mon.	(eve)	*Cinderella* (Fonteyn, Somes)
5th	,,	Tues.	(eve)	*Cinderella* (Nerina, Blair)
6th	,,	Wed.	(eve)	*The Prince of the Pagodas* (Beriosova, Blair)
7th	,,	Thur.	(eve)	*The Prince of the Pagodas* (Linden, Hynd)
8th	,,	Fri.	(eve)	*The Prince of the Pagodas* (Beriosova, Blair)
9th	,,	Sat.	(mat)	*Cinderella* (Linden, Doyle)
,,	,,	Sat.	(eve)	*Cinderella* (Fonteyn, Somes)
11th	,,	Mon.	(eve)	*The Prince of the Pagodas* (Beriosova, Blair)
12th	,,	Tues.	(eve)	*Les Patineurs, Checkmate, Daphnis and Chloe* (Fonteyn, Grey, Jackson, Farron, Linden, Page; Somes, Shaw, Grant, Chatfield, Edwards)
13th	,,	Wed.	(eve)	*Les Patineurs, Checkmate, Daphnis and Chloe* (Fonteyn, Jackson, Farron, Lindsay, Page, B. Taylor; Somes, Shaw, Grant, Chatfield, Blair, Edwards)
14th	,,	Thur.	(eve)	*The Prince of the Pagodas* (Beriosova, Blair)
15th	,,	Fri.	(eve)	*The Prince of the Pagodas* (Linden, Hynd)
16th	,,	Sat.	(mat)	*Le Lac des Cygnes* (Fifield, Blair)
,,	,,	Sat.	(eve)	*Le Lac des Cygnes* (Fonteyn, Somes)
18th	,,	Mon.	(eve)	*Le Lac des Cygnes* (Beriosova, Chatfield)
19th	,,	Tues.	(eve)	*Le Lac des Cygnes* (Jackson, Somes)
20th	,,	Wed.	(eve)	*Sylvia* (Fonteyn, Somes)
21st	,,	Thur.	(eve)	*Sylvia* (Grey, Chatfield)
22nd	,,	Fri.	(eve)	*Le Lac des Cygnes* (Fifield, Blair)
23rd	,,	Sat.	(mat)	*Sylvia* (Linden, Blair)
,,	,,	Sat.	(eve)	*Sylvia* (Beriosova, Chatfield)
25th	,,	Mon.	(eve)	*Le Lac des Cygnes* (Grey, Chatfield)
26th	,,	Tues.	(eve)	Gala Performance at 8 p.m. (All Seats Sold) *Les Sylphides, Petrouchka, Birthday Offering.*
27th	,	Wed.	(eve)	*Les Sylphides, Petrouchka, Birthday Offering* (Fonteyn, Grey, Nerina, Jackson, Beriosova, Fifield, Linden, Lindsay; Somes, Shaw, Grant, Chatfield, Blair, Ashbridge, Clegg, Doyle, Ashton)

SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE BALLET ON TOUR

W/c.	Feb. 25	*The Gaumont, Southampton*
,,	Mar. 4	*Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham*
,,	,, 11	*Lyceum, Sheffield*
,,	,, 18	*Embassy, Peterborough*
,,	,, 25	*Theatre Royal, Norwich*
,,	Apr. 29	*Four weeks' season at the Opera House, Barcelona.*

FESTIVAL BALLET

W/c.	Feb. 25	*The Hippodrome, Brighton*
,,	Mar. 4	*The New Theatre, Oxford*
,,	,, 11	*The Empire Theatre, Liverpool*

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Mar. 29 to Apr. 7 (inclusive) *Copenhagen*
Apr. 9 to 11 (inclusive) *Aarhus, Denmark*
Apr. 23 to 29 *Dusseldorf, Germany*

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,,	,, 18	*His Majesty's, Aberdeen*

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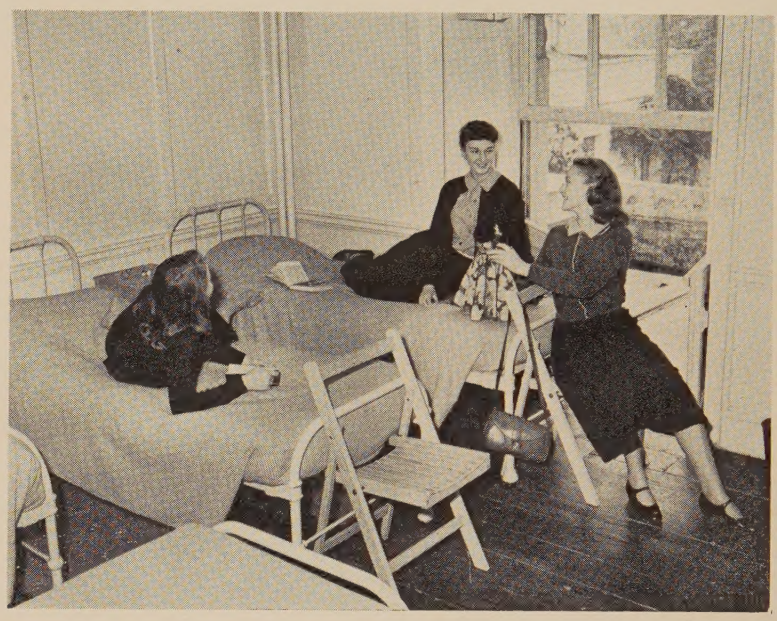

* THE LUCKY EIGHT PER CENT

White Lodge in Richmond Park, the first home of the Queen Mother after her marriage to King George VI—then the Duke of York—now houses the Royal Ballet School (formerly the Sadler's Wells School).

Our photographs shew:—

(1) *This is how every child pictures the school.*

(2) *But there are lessons to be done; ballet occupies only a very small part of the educational time. Here is English Master K. G. Bowles taking a class in Shakespeare.*

(3) *With lessons at an end, after-school confidences are exchanged in the Upper Fifth Form Dormitory.*

(4) *And the young ones get together for a mid-morning chatter in the Cloakroom.*

* Only eight per cent. of the total applicants can be taken into the school.

ALL THE STARS

Alicia Markova
Margot Fonteyn
Nadia Nerina
Svetlana Beriosova
Violetta Elvin
Elaine Fifield
Rowene Jackson
Natalie Krassovska
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